

Danthology

**The Danceaturgy Workshop
Spring 2015**

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The Danceatrgy Workshop 1-23-15

No. 1 “The theme for this year’s repertory is *Inspiration!*”

What does inspiration mean to you – as a dancer?”

- ...Inspiration is the thing that can put a twinkle in my eye or a knowing smirk on my face because I have the feeling of being touched by muses.
- ...Sometimes inspiration is simply the fuel to keep going.
- Inspiration is finding that “thing” that compels me to move my body while being able to captivate an audience.
- ...The energy [of inspiration] can either be reserved (contained) or outward (free) to portray a sense of particular awareness within one’s self.
- ...Oftentimes it is inspiration that pushes me to go further in class and when I am choreographing. As a dance ed student, I also hope to be the inspiration for my students as dancers.
- ...Overall I think inspiration is what drives dance. It is an art form, so we are constantly looking at the world around us – trying to make sense of it and put it into our own words through movement.
- As a dancer we all have the tools to be technically great, but inspiration is what an artist uses to breathe life into the dance.
- As a dancer, inspiration means to be positively influenced by another professional, dancer, other people, and a host of other things.
- ...Unlike a paint brush or writing utensil, the body feels emotion, and dancers use that emotion to be inspired and to create movement reflecting what we are feeling.
- - Inspiration is something that plants the seed...It’s something that can come out of nowhere, but can light and relight the fire inside of us that makes us want to push harder and keep going.
- - I think of inspiration as the energy I find that propels me through my dancing. It can be one thought that sends a warmth through my body and moves me from the inside out.
- - Inspiration is what wakes me up in the morning to take part in my dance classes. As a dancer, inspiration is the key to growth.
- - Inspiration brings meaning and purpose behind the movement. Sometimes it is given to me from the choreographer, such as an intention that I must keep in mind throughout the dance...
- ...When I think of inspiration I think of the kids I used to teach at my studio. I show them that anything is possible when you set your mind to it.
- - Inspiration is cause and effect; it comes from somewhere to make something go somewhere else. Inspiration gives a *reason*...
- Inspiration is the light that keeps everything you see, touch, and feel new.

The Danceaturgy Workshop – January 30, 2015 – Inspiration!

No. 2 Prompt: “Going deeper,” as Lori would say, based upon the discussion we just had in class, and upon reading and talking about what you all wrote *last* week, go back to this question *again*, and dig deeper, and find something you didn’t write about last time.

What does INSPIRATION! mean to you – as a dancer?

- It’s the fuel that pushes your body to its limits while still having a clear purpose and intention behind the movement...In community, especially, inspiration is what makes dancers live in the moment.
- Being able to be around a group of people that have the same feeling and desire for what they are doing.
- Before each performance of *Continuo*, we would circle up as a cast and give each other our support...The energy from that circle inspired us and helped us feel connected before the curtain went up.
- Inspiration is the physical manifestation of desire, anxiety, and hope in our bodies. It is with each breath we take and quickened heartbeat we experience that makes us go further and try harder.
- On stage, I immediately form a “character” that connects inspiration to the movement, music, costumes and lighting.
- Inspiration, as in yoga, is a mind and body experience. One could be inspired through their senses...but it also takes the intricate computations of such an experience that creates a moment of inspiration.
- Like we talked about, dancers feed off of each other’s energy and “help” each other while performing. I’ve come to the conclusion that doing so is sort of an instinct of ours...It is a pretty magical thing.
- Inspiration is the effect of the “dancer high.” In a performance setting, I am inspired by the process of starting with nothing and ending with a group of people moving together on stage.
- ...I find myself caught in the short euphoric-like state often when becoming inspired...Just imagine how many audience members can be captivated at once by a single move that a dancer does in a spotlight.
- Inspiration starts with the physical things we use to feed upon...another person, a piece of art work, or a song. The passion we have mixed with that energy motivates us to be the best that we can be.
- ...The most special and inspirational moments come when I am able to share a feeling on stage through eye contact with another dancer...In a split second, I can be reminded of how special the opportunity of dancing can be.
- We talked a lot about energy today. When your energy matches or is similar to another person’s, you feel inspired...and you feel important, standing alone, or with a group.
- Inspiration happens in a fleeting moment, but stays with a person for a lifetime.
- Inspiration is a starting point for growth, for something to come of it. It activates a strong perception of what is around you and what you can take from it.
- Inspiration can sometimes come when you least expect it to happen. At times, it is better to let inspiration find *you*, than you finding *it*.

No. 3 Danceaturgy Workshop – “Out of body experience.” 2/6/15

prompt: Imagine...an 'out of body' experience...*you* are sitting in the audience...and you notice *you* dancing up there, on the stage...

there is something *inspiring* about that dancer...what is it?

how and why does that dancer inspire you, and what does it feel like to watch her or him?

you must use the third person, i.e., *she* or *he*, when telling this story.

I'm standing backstage trying to get centered, standing in circle with my fellow dancers trying to sense their energy. We go to our places and I close my eyes and envision myself nailing my double turn before the curtain goes up. Then, all of a sudden I go from a dancer to an audience member. I watch three lines of dancers – one whose lightness in demeanor goes exceedingly well with the tone of the work and draws my eye to her. Her subtlety makes her look very human and stimulates me. The differences in all of the dancers are truly beautiful and her grace fits well into the mosaic of movers. Her small, featured section was very inspiring to me because she embodied the tone of the dance while showcasing her technique gracefully landing her double pirouette.

My name is Out of Body Spectator and this is my short story of the dancer who captivated my attention on a Dark and Stormy night. As I sat in the audience and the dancers began to defy gravity, the limits of human flexibility and laws of physics all together, I began to allow the majesty of the piece take me on a journey. As with any journey one can't help but to notice what or who stands out regardless of the time, place, or situation. His name was____, and when I saw him moving with the music as well as his fellow colleagues on that stage, a sense of curiosity and freedom came over me. His energy was furious and animalistic but mysterious. He seemed to allow all of the surrounding emotions of the music and dancers take him on the same journey I was on. One that brought his presence to life in a theatrical or even regal manor. His presence was something original that allowed me as a spectator to relate to his internal and external energies as they emanated through the space. The energy morphed with the mood of the music and it was at those moments I felt like I belonged there at that very moment because the story was being told to me and me The Spectator Alone. The music then began to fade and these mythical creatures that defied laws thought forbidden to most of the human race faded with it. As they faded I snapped into reality noticing that____'s energy had all but drifted away with the dimming lights, leaving me with a sense of nostalgia and hunger for more. . .

She has a glow in her eyes. Her breath flows out through all directions of every inch of her skin. Whether "on" or "off her leg" she embodies a full presence capturing the very aspects of the character she is providing. The music moves not just through her but with her. She is alive -- in all aspects of the word.

...Her love for dance and the stage shows through her movement and through her face. I think of the quote "she who leaves a trail of glitter is never forgotten."

...As the curtain rises and the lights brighten to a warm glow the dancers begin to move. After a few moments there is one dancer whose focus seems to reach straight through me; she seems to be performing just for me. As she continues to float and dart across the stage I find myself constantly being drawn to watch her. As the show continues I realize that I am experiencing all of the emotions of her performance right along with her. I sense that the dance is beginning to conclude and I find myself wanting to see more. As the dancers take their bows I can feel an immense sense of accomplishment and happiness exploding from within her. After the curtain has closed I find

myself back in my seat in the audience and not in the world that was just before my eyes and I am filled with the urge to run out of the theater and start dancing!

I feel like you can always tell when someone is comfortable onstage or not. Just because you love to dance does not always mean you are a performer as well. It doesn't always come natural to people to have that ability to project to an audience, to lighten up the face, and connect both body and mind together.... However, as I am in the audience, I am drawn to the dancer that has this ability. It is like it is only me and that one performer in the room - I am so zoned in that nothing else seems significant at that moment. Whether it is her ability to dance in perfect sync with the music playing, or the way her facial expressions reach me all the way out in the balcony; I feel a connection with that person. I can feel this connection even though I may not be a dancer myself, but what they are portraying still at that moment resonates to me.

While sitting in the audience of a performance, I find myself entranced by a particular dancer. While the choreography, costumes, and all other aspects of the performance are there, what catches my eye is the physicality and intent. She is performing the same choreography as everyone else on stage, but what makes her stand out to me and inspire me is how we can see that she giving every last ounce of energy she has into the movement. She is not just making movements and shapes on stage, *she is creating art with her body*. This dancer's intent and physicality is inspiring to me because it makes the piece so much more than just "a dance"; she is giving the movement life.

I am sitting in the audience waiting for the show to begin. The lights go out and the curtain comes up. The music starts to play and a ballet piece begins. A couple minutes into the dance, a dancer with dark hair and long legs enters the stage. She is wearing a long flowing dress that moves as if it was being blown by the breeze. As I watched this dancer move, I noticed how graceful she was. I also noticed how calm, relaxed, and peaceful she was as she executed each movement. Each one of her steps flowed seamlessly into the next. Her stage presence and graceful movements made me as though time had stopped.

She is wearing the same costume as everyone else and is doing the same movement -- but something is different. It's her face. *It's not the aesthetics of her face, but the way she uses it while on stage*. It does not constantly remain the same. It changes based on what is going on around her. She does not have the most flexibility, strength, or grace. Her strength is in her performance quality. She is captivating. She makes me engaged with the dance and makes me think what the dance piece is about. When she takes her bow she is smiling which makes me smile.

As the curtain goes up there is a group of dancers on the stage, but my eyes only focus on one. This dancer that has caught my attention moves amongst the others on stage with great profoundness. Her every move glitters and ignites. Yes, this is the quality that sets her apart from the rest. Automatically, her passion and energy for dance penetrates to the audience, especially towards me. She moves with exactness, while also bringing *persona* into the choreography. She succeeds in her desire to want to be remembered by her audience. The curtain closes and I am touched by this tiny dancer who portrayed herself so mightily on the stage. She has brought me to see the greatness in something so small, whether it was her glare, a step, or simply embracing her presence. She inspires me to go beyond predestined limitations, reminding me that I am capable of igniting, too.

As the dancer enters the stage, he immediately casts this influence of energy that signals for attention from the audience. From the exact moment of stepping foot onto the performance space, he quickly feels as if he has travelled through a portal, which has transported both the dancer and audience member into another world. The entire production, or “gig,” provides this multidirectional connection that can develop sensations of physical, emotional, mental, psychological, philosophical, and sociological relationships. This performer has this ability to become a chameleon, meaning he understands how to transition from one state of being to another in a matter of seconds. This is important for the relationship since the dancer has to commit to the idea of being “relatable” to the audience member by only using the body to speak.

The performer is able to incorporate all of the elements of performance to provide the audience member with an inspirational experience. He has this awareness of what his body does and utilizes his technical ability to create a structure and mold for the choreography to encompass. He has this natural ability to perform on any emotional level to provide a detailed script of setting a particular mood for others to feel within. While engulfing all of the dance basics, he takes advantage of his performance space, costuming, lighting, and energies from other possible dancers to heighten the level of quality and emphasis to the dancing.

Just like a bonsai tree, the dancer has to be able to prune away layers to show different sides of vulnerability and present himself as a living structure that requires constant care, attention, devotion, and patience to bring out the outward and inward beauty. The dancer continues to grow during his entire time on stage only by the connection he has with the audience member. By doing so, this allows the dancer to share a similar inspirational journey with the audience, one that entails continuous refining and reevaluating.

What I would notice that what is "inspiring" on stage is his commitment to character. Perhaps it's because of his acting experience in high school, but I always find him really *present* in the emotional content of the piece. Especially when the piece is intense, or emotionally heavy (not light and happy), he loves to indulge in the character that inspires the movement. This dancer inspires me because without emotional content there is no story, or train of thought. Without those features, I cannot say I went to a ‘good show.’ My commitment as an audience member comes from the commitment from the dancer on stage.

The girl on stage dances with unique power and energy. Her movements have a strong sense of direction and focus. She seems very present in the moment and intent on connecting herself to the space around her. She commands attention without being over the top or theatrical. The inspiring thing about this dancer is her *authenticity*. The way in which she presents herself to the audience is very real, honest, and expressive of her true self.

When I am sitting in the audience and I see this girl dancing on stage I can *feel* her. I am watching her every move, how she is drawing me in is that she is using her focus so well and I want to try to see where she is going next. She is also leaving me hanging in some spots because her focus is being used to keep me watching. I feel that she loves and enjoys being on the stage. All the hard work that she has put into the piece -- you can see it just by the way she is feeling the movement in her body.

As I sit here watching this show I notice a girl who has amazing physical strength. As she dances you see that she doesn't have much of an expression on her face but she has great physicality. The way she uses her body to tell a story I can almost feel the emotion she is trying to portray or wants the audience to feel. Watching her I can do nothing but feel what she is feeling. She inspires me to create movement that is both organic and 100% original. From the way she moves you can tell she is passionate but there is something in her face that makes you want to know her on a more personal level. There is something that she seems to be holding on to.

Informance – 3/23/15

Introduction – Jennifer Campbell

Hello everyone - Welcome to our 2015 Informance. My name is Jennifer Campbell and I am a member of the Danceaturgy workshop. The Danceaturgs are a small group of students who meet every Friday to analyze, discuss and write about our current dance repertory here at Montclair. The theme for this year's Danceworks repertory is "inspiration!" As you watch excerpts from each of the pieces presented today, think about how you personally are inspired by music, emotions, or movements executed by our fellow dancers. How do *you* find inspiration, and how do *you* inspire others by dancing?

We encourage you to share your thoughts during the Q+A portion led by Heather Pollak, following our discussion.

Before we start the show, I would like all the Danceaturgs to stand up for a round of applause.

Now let's begin with Suki Agosto and Mecca White who will introduce Kathleen Kelley's new dance film - *A Note for the Dancer*.

A Note for the Dancer –by Kathleen Kelley

Suki Agosto and Mecca White

Mecca: Montclair State University's Kathleen Kelley's newest work, "A Note for the Dancer", is a dance film, which is a totally new experience for the program. This work has a very "film noir" theme, it is in black and white with a fifties era feel. Kathleen explained that the basis of any of her creations are challenging her self and taking risks. Her main source of inspiration for this new work was the music she chose to use, which is an original song composed by her husband Greg Tuohi from his 2013 jazz album called "First". She described the music as being nostalgic and old fashioned sounding, due to the fact that her husband is very drawn to composers of the 1920's and 60's including French composer Eric Satie. Beginning from the music was a challenge for Kathleen however; the nostalgia of the music led her to the idea of setting a piece in "a time that wasn't this time". During the creative process Kathleen began discussing costume ideas with the designer Derek Robertson. She just told him very vaguely she wanted the dancers in dresses with maybe a fifties feel. Derek became very inspired and created costumes that added the time period feel into the work and really brought it together.

Suki: Kathleen wanted dance to exist in a new way, other than just being performed on stage. She wanted to introduce something new to the program to challenge her self and the dancers and speaking from experience it was definitely a challenge. Being a part of this film required me to adapt my performance skills to better suit “the screen”. In rehearsals we focused less on the “movement” and more on embodying a character through the movement and the gestures. Filming was also a very interesting process because I had to change my performance energy depending on the shot. For example, there were often times where Kathleen would just be recording a movement phrase from the chest up or from the knee down so I would have to focus more on putting the expression in those parts of my body. Because the film is not yet complete I cannot say exactly how it will look and Kathleen has even said that the finished product may look like nothing the dancers in it may recognize. She also explained how film is such an interesting medium for dance because usually dance works are ineffable only leaving an impression behind. Film, gives a work a whole new life and a new way to manipulate it. She describes how she enjoys dealing with dance as if it were an object. One of Kathleen’s main goals for this new work was to create a product for her husband’s song however in the future she hopes to send the video to dance festivals and put it online where it will have a very different life than it would had it been performed on stage.

Megalopolis – by Larry Keigwin

Emma Pressman and Chelsea McCloskey

Megalopolis is an exciting piece to watch and to dance. We fly across the stage as the audience watches from the edge of their seats. Larry Keigwin choreographed this piece in 2009 for the students at Julliard. Emily Schoen a dancer in his company set the piece on us in the fall and Diann Sichel has been our rehearsal director. When creating Megalopolis Larry began his creative process as he often does, by improvising and asking his dancers to create phrases based off of his improvisation. After finding a “hook” from one of the dancers’ phrases he started working with the idea of an antenna. From there he found movements that reminded him of “tunneling” and this brought him to the concept of an ant colony.

A megalopolis is a large, heavily populated city or urban complex, and Larry has created a complex colony of urban ants. During the choreographic process Larry chose to use music by Steve Reich, but one day when he walked into the studio the dancers were playing M.I.A while they were reviewing the material. He saw how much more energy this music gave the dancers and decided that he would fuse the two types of music. Larry believes in keeping true to the choreographic process and not being married to certain ideas. This openness allows his pieces to morph and develop into their truest forms. Larry found his inspiration from ants, how they travel and create tunnels and patterns, however his intent for Megalopolis is not to show the audience how ants move but something else entirely. Each time Megalopolis is performed it is different,

even after being in many rehearsals and performing it I have never experienced this piece the same way twice. This is due to Larry's use of improvisation within the piece. There are a few solos that are purely improvisational and will never be repeated, he believes that this keeps the dance alive. Using improvisation keeps the dancers true to their movement and on the tips of their toes. **Emma**

It is evident while watching this piece how much fun the dancers are having while performing. Megalopolis is unlike the classical modern dance we are so used to. Between the unique combinations of the MIA music selection mixed with virtuosic choreography, it is natural for the dancers to genuinely soak up this performance. Through Larry's choreographic process of having his dancers use improvisation as a sketch for his design, he became inspired by a particular arm gesture classified as his "hook". This gesture reminded him of an ant antenna giving an explosion of inspiration to his intention. Larry explains this process of using his inspiration to create a dance as "sewing a dress together". Although Larry has sewed this dress together, the fabric of the dress makes up a major aspect. The fabrics of this dress are the dancers. In Megalopolis the dancers have the power to transform this piece into the spectacle it is. There is a collaboration of individuality and conformity that brings a fresh approach to the audience time and time again. With this power the dancers are what inspires me the most. When performing this piece I use the dancers around me as inspiration. Whether being a large group, duet, or solo, there is an overwhelming energy surrounding each movement on stage that builds as the piece progresses. The choreography, music, and the energy together fuel the dancers as they create this spectacle. This spectacle of intricate counting, stamina, and precise patterns connects these dancers together to form a colony. It is our goal to perfectly execute the choreography while portraying an essence of ease. The audience is simply looking into our daily tasks as we travel nonchalantly through our everyday pathways. It is crucial that each dancer is connected together throughout the length of this dance. It is the exact combination of dancers that were brought together that make this connection as powerful as it is. We push each other through this piece. I know when I am completely out of breath I can interact with the dancers around me and completely forget that I am out of breath and the challenge of the choreography. This support and drive we all have for each other allows us to perform to the best of our ability. The overall experience of Megalopolis gives us a "dancer high" that inspires us to do it over and over again. – **Chelsea**

***A Choreographic Offering* – by Jose Limon**

Melody Marti and Heather Pollak

"The Inherited Gift of "A Choreographic Offering"

During the course of this year Montclair's Dance students have had the privilege of learning and dancing José Limón's "A Choreographic Offering" with the guidance of rehearsal director, Maxine Steinman, and current artistic director of the Limón Dance Company, Carla Maxwell. The purpose of choreographer, José Limón's, "A Choreographic Offering" (created in 1964) is inspiring on its own, as it is his gift to his dear friend and mentor, Doris Humphrey. Humphrey, a modern artist and choreographer, was the first to be Artistic Director of his company, The Limón Dance Company. Limón choreographed this piece to Bach's "A Musical Offering". As we know,

the choreography in a dance carries in depth meaning behind it. Now imagine choreographing a dance for an individual who plays a significant role in your life.

This piece portrays Limón's distinctive hand gestures as the dancers outstretch their arms to the audience as if bestowing something to them. Limón thought about what would make this gift a memorable one. He incorporated Humphrey's movement techniques such as fall and recovery. In this way, the gift was personalized and meaningful to her. Cheerfulness is depicted in the piece through direct movement that also has the freedom of falling in and through space. The persona in this piece is always being created and is never established considering the amount of time from when it was first choreographed and danced until present day.

Being able to perform "A Choreographic Offering" inspires me -- as a dancer -- because it allows me to feel free, while also maintaining order and cohesiveness with the other dancers in the piece. The piece instills a sense of deep responsibility within the cast that brings us together like a bouquet of flowers, but also gives us the liberty to dance on our own, standing out, like a single flower that blooms amongst the rest. The technique in the piece requires a lot of breath, an important asset that I have incorporated and utilized in areas of the piece that bring joy and life. I have learned that a gift can be given, passed down, and used in many ways. When performing "A Choreographic Offering", I imagine myself dedicating the piece to the audience. It is a way for me to inspire and thank them for watching me and my peers perform. - **Melody**

A Choreographic Offering is a piece that epitomizes the expansively direct form of the Limon technique in its initiation and execution. At its premier in 1964, the work was originally 58 minutes long, but has since then been divided into sections of varying length. It represents the joyous giving of thanks by offering what has been received, to the audience. It is both demonstrative and reciprocated in this way. Jose Limon received a life through dance, because Doris Humphrey took him into her company and under her wing. She is the reason for Limon's being able to soar in his own right.

With his technique, the body experiences a conjunction of grounded directness in the initiation of the movement with a resonating denouement just as a harmonious chord would resolve; the dance becomes through this an inherent expression of the music.

Another attribute of the piece pertains to this year's theme for the Martha Graham Dance Company's season at the Joyce Theater, where we recently performed *A Choreographic Offering*. "Shape and Design" reminds us of this piece's complex use of space to create visually appealing formations.

Limon's melodic use of circles and diagonals on the stage set up a platform for showing, with clarity, his interpretation of the intricacies of the music, and the way in which he was "inspired."

Limon offered his work to his mentor, and in turn created a timeless articulation of dancers' gratitude toward their audience. Without onlookers (today that's you) there would be no offering to be made, and no one would be there to receive the gift of dance. **Heather**

Exist in the Repeat of Practice – by Christian Von Howard

Kim Kafka

When you see Christian von Howard's piece, *Exist in the Repeat of Practice* in Dance Works this April, the main idea is to simply see *dance*. It might sound strange to say this, but it actually isn't. A "dance" piece nowadays sometimes barely challenges a dancer's physicality and musicality. Yet, the dancers in a piece desire nothing more than to be able to freely move across and dominate the dance floor we call a stage. Christian von Howard is giving his ensemble of eleven female dancers this great chance.

The piece was originally commissioned by the Alvin Ailey School for the Ailey/Fordham BFA Junior Class. It premiered at the Ailey Citigroup Theater in November 2014. Less than a year later it is being brought to the Kasser Theater at Montclair State University. Christian von Howard is a new addition to the dance department's faculty. He has been received by the students with open arms. This past Works-A-Foot show, he debuted a new and original piece called *Her Words to the End of the World*. However, he did not continue with it because it needed more time to develop the conceptual aspect of it in the studio. This would have made the piece even longer which did not fit into the ideal program that the Dance Works show calls for in the spring. Which is

why *Exist in the Repeat of Practice* was brought into the repertoire. It is a piece that is shorter in length while demanding a high degree of physicality from the all-female cast.

During the piece, the cast is wearing long skirts which defines the space they are moving through. The high *battements* of the dancers' legs are accentuated by their skirts tracing the path they create. In this way, the skirts represent another character on the dance floor, further developing the drama of the piece that is inspired by just truly dancing. The inspiration of this piece creates moving architecture by manipulating the space through the dancers' bodies and the character of the skirts. The added complexity of the music helps drive the dancers' beating hearts to loose themselves in the dance. The music at one point builds until the dancers are left standing side by side in a long horizontal line. The noise of the music disappears for a moment. The music comes back to life as the dancers' legs move in synchronization creating one long line of intensified skirts moving as one. The dancers' legs swivel in and out creating an illusion of a never ending line of skirts. The composition of the music helps mold the drama that is *Exist in the Repeat of Practice*.

I asked cast member, Imani Carter, what inspired her to dance in Christian von Howard's piece. I told her to say the first thing that came to her mind. She said, "Dance." I instantly understood what she meant. This piece gives her the freedom to expose her range of movement to an audience. She is not boxed into small movements. She and her fellow cast members are allowed to really express themselves.

In the piece there is a motif where the dancers' hands are close together but not touching. It is as if they are holding something in the space created with their hands. The idea is that they are holding the world. Not in the literal sense, but in the sense that the dancers are holding what they truly value. The dancers are saying with their bodies, 'here I am and look what I have to offer.' I would say the dancers have a lot to offer in this demanding piece.

While watching the piece, simply enjoy movement for movement's sake. The complexity is in the movement itself. Take it for what it is...it

is a dance. A dance with eleven, talented, female dancers wearing long skirts that move through the space with them. Experience watching the dancers become physically pushed to the limit and letting the exhilaration of moving through space bring their performance to the next level.

Rite by Nancy Lushington

Jackie Kosoff

Inspiration played a huge part in the process of creating this piece. Nancy's work began with her collaborative process with Kathleen. Nancy's first experience with combining dance and video projections was her piece last year, "Spatial Dialogues". While she was involved in the structure of the projections then, she is now separated from that process, as this work is even more experimental. We, as dancers, and including Nancy, have seen parts of the projections but will not see everything put together until we get into the theater. The projections have been discussed logistically, but not specifically insofar as the designs that will be portrayed. The choreography itself is based off the idea of a ritual. Nancy has always been inspired by the original Rite of Spring by Nijinsky and Stravinsky as well as the subsequent versions, including Pina Bausch's version in 1975, Paul Taylor's in 1980 and Joyce Trisler's in 1974, which Nancy danced in. She used these ideas as inspiration but did not intend on competing with them: rather, she used them as a "jumping off place" while experiencing the ideas of community and "shared purpose."

Stacey Richetelli

The circle pattern inspired Kathleen to film from above with the idea of a kaleidoscope for the basis of the projections. From the circle, the piece opens up into the "L" for the second section which Nancy envisions as a "screen" for the visuals with us, the dancers, moving into and out of the

lines that serve as barriers. Also in this section is the original concept of the "sacrificial maiden" as a soloist and her ascending up the dancers as a "cliff." Musically, Nancy was meticulous in her choices. The first song is repetitive and subdued, which cemented the ritual aspect, while the second section is far more dynamic, as also seen in the intentional lack of unison. In the collaboration with the costume designer, Becky Erlitz, Nancy referenced the original inspiration of "Rite of Spring" in a more streamlined way, keeping in mind that it would also act as the "screen" for some of the projections.

Symbolic Logic – by Sean Curran

Genna Mergola and Eric Parra

Sean went through some rough times and had to go into a rehabilitation center. When he got out, he felt that he wanted to get one of his pieces performed by his company at the Joyce Theater. He told us that he wanted to make his dance about Thanksgiving because his anniversary of being sober was on Thanksgiving. He also thought this was a symbol of his getting better, physically as well as spiritually. He wanted to make this dance about symbols and he thought: "what is the most common symbol?" He came up with a circle. That is why there is a circle on the floor. Sean keeps a book of different possible titles for dances in it, things he will see wherever he is that inspire him and make him think will be a good title for a dance one day. He saw the words "Symbolic Logic" somewhere in his travels and wrote it down in his book. When he had decided on his dance about Thanksgiving he took a look in his title book and saw the words "Symbolic Logic" and thought it fit perfectly.

Heather Waldon would say that it still is a performance piece, but very concentrated on the internal part of the performance. She really wanted us to look at each other while we were dancing and performing. I really love performing this piece. I remember in rehearsal one day Heather was saying how solos were fun to do, but she loved dancing with other people on stage the most because she

can connect with her friends. Along with the movement, those are my favorite things about this piece while performing it. I am thankful for having the chance to perform it. Thanks to Sean Curran, Heather Waldon, and Kim Whittam. - Genna

Sean Curran is the genius behind the piece Symbolic Logic, a meditative, spiritual and earthy dance that came to life in 1999. The premise of the dance revolves around the idea of giving thanks. The inspiration of this dance comes from finding peace within yourself as a dancer on the stage. It deals with focusing internally to be able to project an external message. The complexity, speed and shapes in space change, but the dancers must contain a strong focus and connectedness to each other in order to successfully convey the meaning. It was also inspired by middle eastern culture, specifically relating to the gestures and music of this dance. Symbolic Logic allows individual dancers to likewise feel each other's energy by understanding their own.

In working through the piece during the semester, we always struggled finding a steady pace for us to follow and be together. We first did this by setting counts to the group sections. However, as we progressed through the piece and worked with the music, we realized that it worked better when we just kept an open eye and open energy towards each other. To help gather our energies, we would practice Tai Chi, the open phrase. We did this to make sure we were connected to the floor, had our energy focused in, and stayed at the same speed. Altogether, it was an honor to dance in the meditative dance of thanks, Symbolic Logic. - Eric

Continuo – by Antony Tudor

Christina Holl and Daniel Padierna

Continuo is a ballet pointe piece choreographed by Antony Tudor in 1971 to the well-known Canon in D by Johann Pachelbel. The dance department was able to obtain the rights to the dance through the Tudor Trust. Beth McPherson and Lynn Grossman were the rehearsal directors. The choreography was learned through Laban notation translated by Beth. The dancers were also fortunate to work with Amanda McKerrow and John Gardner- dancers who worked with Tudor himself years ago and now help set pieces for the Tudor Trust.

Continuo consists of six dancers, three men and three women, creating three couples. The overall quality of the dance is angelic and light. The dance does not have specific narrative, but Tudor believed that any dance is narrative in some way simply because it is performed by people. As a dancer in this piece, I am inspired by the music because it serves as an auditory impulse. The movement style of the dance matches the flow of the music. Technically the dance is very difficult, but the dancers must not give off that impression to the audience. We must always remember that the performance quality is just as important as the technicality of the steps. - Christina

Continuo can be compared to baking a delicious cake. Having the proper dancers with both technical and performance qualities provide Tudor's work with the best ingredients to mix together. The training process most resembles the baked growth of the ingredients, catalyzing metabolic changes from the exterior and interior beings of the dancers. After mounting the various layers of cake, the dancers present a structure that reaches an apex to fulfill the choreography. Then the dancers are able to effortlessly 'frost' their cake differently each time they perform.

Continuo showcases its dancers through its need for effortless execution. It invites the audience to join in on each couple's story of love, friendship and unity. It is this idea of "being" and becoming the breath that *inspires* the dancers to embody angelic movement qualities of affection, admiration, faith, and trust.

Anthony Tudor choreographed his movement based on "theme and variation," meaning standard phrases of choreography are repeated throughout the piece, each one revealing a slight difference within the steps.

With the choreography including many lifts sequences, balances, and positions to complete, the dancers have the responsibility to execute the technical aspects while still making the choreography seem easy and natural to the body. The dancers have to understand each other in ways that represent more than just the dance itself. The levels of trust between dancers are crucial to the performance value of this piece. – Daniel

Running Spirits – by Frederick Earl Mosley

Audra Hofacker and William Ervin

Running Spirits

Thirty bodies are on the stage, dressed in white from head to toe, performing syncopated acts in perfect harmony. The stage illuminates as the dancers emerge from stage left. More and more of them materialize as they make their ways across in full determination. But where are they going?

The works of Mr. Frederick Earl Mosley are always the crowd pleaser. Whether they're physically stimulating, distinctly rhythmic, or downright emotional – this man knows how to grab your attention and then drive it home. *Running Spirits* is no exception. At even the slightest mention of the piece its dancers display looks of defeat and comment on how much it makes them sweat. And they never fail to express the complexity and specifications of each rhythm. One dancer exclaimed, "When performing *Running Spirits*, all I hear is Mosley's voice singing 'dee-da-deet-dee-dee, daa, daa' in my head. That way I know I am doing it right."

Believe it or not, *Running Spirits* is a whopping ten years old; it was first choreographed in 2005 on a group of about thirty boys at EMIA. Mr. Mosley said he wanted to create a dance that dealt with the themes of running, jumping, and repeated quick stepping. The driving force of the music was intended to create a highly athletic environment for the dancers. When asked about the meaning of piece, Mosley said he sees the dancers as angels. In his imagination, the

dancers use their feet to fly instead of the wings on their backs. Since he didn't want to call the piece "Running Angels," he chose the next closest thing. *Running* equals flying, and *Spirits* equals angels.

There is something magical about feeling like the stage floor is going to crumble underneath the thirty pairs of feet -- jumping, chugging, and stomping around. Although there are so many dancers in the piece, Mosley left room for individualization. With the juxtaposition of solos and improvisations, every rehearsal feels like an audition. And if it weren't for the energies that each individual performer brings to the stage, huffing and puffing, with sweat dripping off their faces, *Running Spirits* would not be as powerful as it is. - **Audra**

Running Spirits is the type of piece that will have you on edge from start to finish. It is a piece that will make the audience engaged and even more so amazed at the synchronization of all of these individual bodies on stage at once. Spirits has moments of suspense that captivate the eye from the improv section to the very ending when the group concludes the piece with their hands slowly declining in the air, as if gently touching a clear pane of glass. Speaking from hands on experience, this piece is quite the cardio workout. I asked Lauren MacAllister, an alumna of Montclair state and one of dancers who have performed Running Spirits multiple times what she thought the piece was about, and she said "It is about endurance and the struggles we go through, an almost literal concept as all of the dancers continue with the fast and hard hitting movements for six minutes straight. The movement alone is an interesting phenomenon. It is almost soulful in quality and uses poses that could be described as picture perfect. I am not sure if it was Mr. Mosley's intention to create moves that could be captured on camera with such beautiful lines of symmetry and asymmetry, but one thing is for sure: Mosley's movement reflects the inner workings of his mind as a choreographer -- a mind that has the ability to not only create complex phrases, but add life to them with a different emotional feeling each time. - William

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Informance Questions & Answers

Moderator – Heather Pollak

- 1) Incorporating this new information about our inspiring repertory, do you have any insights or aspects that really struck you?
- 2) What inspires you about dance as a performer?
- 3) Has a person, song, concept or idea inspired you as a choreographer? (Pause for affirmation)
Would anyone like to share their experience?
- 4) What kinds of thoughts, feelings or emotions come from within, when reflecting on your own personal muses or sources of inspiration?
- 5) What makes dance an inspirational art-form?

Conclusion – Jennifer Campbell

This concludes the Informance.

On behalf of the danceaturgs, I would like to thank you all for coming today.

This tradition was created by Linda Roberts many years ago, as a way to get together in the spirit of dance and share our ideas. We try to plant the seed that inspires deeper thought and stronger awareness, connecting both the dancer and the viewer.

We can now look forward to seeing all the hard work that has gone into this year's repertory at our upcoming Danceworks performances.

We would like to thank you, Lori and all the faculty members and rehearsal directors who are so helpful to us as dancers and we are so grateful to you for allowing us to grow and flourish. Our teachers are truly an inspiration to us all.

I would like the danceaturgs to stand up for one final round of applause for their efforts in preparing today's presentation.

Thank you all for attending the *Informance*.